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ABSTRACT

Higher education in Nigeria, until recently, has been one of the economic sectors that was accorded top priority funding. In the last few years, however, government support has been reduced. Data show that higher education in Nigeria has progressively suffered cuts in the allocation of funds. The roles of public finance (government) and that of alternate revenue sources must be examined. It is considered that it is the responsibility of government as a principal operator of higher education to fund the system fully and adequately, but society at large has to be educated to see the need to be involved in the funding and management of higher education in Nigeria. Some potential alternate sources of financial support are discussed. These are: (1) private enterprise; (2) community participation; (3) payment by the individual recipient of educational services; (4) an individual higher education tax; (5) a stabilization fund established by the government; (6) work study programs; (7) contributions by voluntary agencies and philanthropic individuals; (8) external revenue sources; (9) alumni association funds; (10) consultancy service revenues; and (11) commercial ventures. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/SLD)

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MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC RECESSION: ALETERNATE REVENUE RESOURCING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

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MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC RECESSION: ALTERNATE REVENUE SOURCING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT

Higher education in Nigeria, until recently, has been one of the areas of ecohomic sectors that used to be accorded top priorities in funding. The paper examines the poor state of higher education in Nigeria in the last few years. Data revealed that Higher education in Nigeria has prograssively suffered cuts in the allocation of funds, with less funds coming into the sector. The roles of public finance (government), and that of alternate revenue sourcing in higher education are also examined. The paper established, that, though, it is the responsibility of the principal operators (governments) of higher institution (education) to fully and adequately fund the system, nevertheless, the society at large has to be educated to see the need of getting involved in the funding and management of higher education in Nigeria.

MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC RECESSION: ALTERNATE REVENUE SOURCING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

Introduction

Higher Education funding in Nigeria in the recent times has gone through several chaotic situations to the extent that it is on the verge of collapsing, and has little or no hope of surviving the current overgrowing demands for greater funding of the system.

Historically, education has been identified as one of the areas that enjoys a high priority in the development planning of most nations of the world. The third national development plan of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, revealed that Nigeria used to be one of those nations that gave a high priority to the funding of education, particularly higher education.

In the first national development plan of 1962-68, higher education and education in general ranked fifth, judged by the magnitude of financial resource allocation. What this means is that investment in education sector had 10.3 percent of the gross public sector investment of about ₦1,400 Billion. The second plan, 1970-74, the sector attracted more emphasis. This time around, education was given top priority by improving it to a position second only to transport. Out of the gross public sector investment of about ₦2.000 billion, it accounted for ₦77.8 million or 13.5 percent of that total investment.

In physical terms, the achievement of these past development efforts have been very modest. These periods have witnessed greater

attention paid to the consolidation and improvement in the quality of education at various level. This attention was however, shortlived. The priority given to the higher education sector from the early sixties up to the seventies has now become a thing of the past. Events of the recent years have been an indication of gradual collapse of higher eddcation system in Nigeria.

Apart from the economic recession that have forced the Federal Government to re-order its priority, evidences abound that funding of higher education to its fullest has not been the priority of the governments in Nigeria. The current trend of financial crisis in our higher institutions is a cause in point to drive home the lookwarm attitude of the governments as regards funding of higher education in Nigeria.

The current situation of fund scarcity in our higher institutions is contrary to what it used to be in the early sixties and seventies. Unlike some of the developed countries where education in general, and particularly higher education are jointly funded by the governments and non-governmental sources, education in Nigeria has been the sole responsibility of various governments since the advent of schools-takeover by these governments. There has been little or no assistance from non-governmental sources.

Halstead (1974) spoke of the tremendous amount of money being expended on higher education in the United States. Between 1971 and 1972, the United States government single handedly provided a staggering fifty-nine percent (59%) of the total income for the Universities, while the non-governmental sources combined accounted for just forty-one percent (41%). In another related study on investment in education, Tilak (1980), found

out that the law of ever increasing State activities in educational financing applied to the University education as well in India. He discovered that within three decades (1946/47-1977/78), government shares in University finances increased from about one third (1/3) to around three quarters (3/4).

The IIEP (1996) revealed that in 1994, Mali government's shares in the cost of basic education was 65.6% of the total cost, while 34.4% was contributed by private individuals and organizations. All over the world Governments have known to be the major source for education funding.

The percentage of governmental involvement in higher education finances in Nigeria used to be higher than even the United States figures. Jiboyewa (1982) attested to the fact that education in Nigeria was no more a private enterprise but a huge governmental venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic intervention and active participation. In the same vein Ojo (1983) in his review of the Nigerian situation on higher education, and especially on University financing, highlignted the fact that 'nuge amount of public funds have been devoted to the development of University education in Nigeria over the years, particularly in the early sixties'. In the first National Development Plan (1962-1968), out of N277.786 million voted for education, University education alone took as much as N80 million, representing thirty percent (30%).

The degree of governmental involvement in the financing of University education has been highly commendable. However, the spirit of enthusiasm with which the government approached the financing of higher education in Nigeria in the early sixties and seventies, is now a thing of history. For several years now, higher education funding by government in Nigeria has taking a nose-dive with a speed that has caught the system gasping for breath. The last few years have witnessed financial crisis in our higher educational institutions than ever before. While higher educational institutions are progressively being stifled of adequate financial allocation from the Federal Government, the institutions are left with two options. The first option is to adopt the attitude of "I don't care", and watch helplessly the gradual collapse of the system, while the second option is to get out and be scouting for alternate resources to keep the institutions running. The later option may be a hard nut to crack, going by the general and widespread attitude of indeference to private involvement in financial responsibility of University education in Nigeria. This however, has left the financing of University education with little or no choice other than to depend on government funding which is not forthcoming. Hence, the need for an alternate means of sourcing higher education in Nigeria.

A review of budget allocation to the education sector between 1985 and 1990 showed the inconsistency and lack of commitment of the government to the adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria. While the Defence sector has been enjoying upward review in budget allocatior

during these periods, the higher education sector in general continued to suffer cut in budget allocation. For the first time since decades, the 1993 budget allocation has once again given education sector a much needed priority over defence allocation. An indication that the government is now waking up to re-dress the past anomalies in the funding of higher education in Nigeria. The two tables below revealed the extent to which the government has committed itself to the finance of higher education between 1985 and 1993, and as compared with peace time defence allocations for the same period.

TABLE I

Approved Recurrent Expenditure for NUC and Defence 1985-1993(M)

Yr.	NUC	Defence	Difference
1985	442, 594, 570	656, 569, 890	213, 975, 320
1986	443, 310, 630	742, 392, 060	299, 081, 430
1987	316, 047, 550	717, 650, 000	401, 602, 450
1988	500, 000, 000	830, 000, 000	330, 000, 000
1989	575, 000, 000	1,122, 208, 580	547, 208, 580
1990	655, 145, 040	1,410, 493, 300	755, 348, 260
1991	655, 145,040	1,834, 189, 930	1,179, 044, 890
1992		2,023,417, 850	
1993		3,085,401, 140	

Source: Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Approved Budget, 1985 - 1993.

TABLE II

Approved Capital Expenditure For NUC and Defence: 1985-1993(Millions)

Year	NUC	Defence	Difference
1985	177,017,120	319,080,811	142,063,691
1986	442,047,000	164,666,000	277,381,000
1987	139,090,640	92,147,549	46,943,091
1988	281,800,000	440,000,000	158,200,000
1989	221,888,000	740,000,000	518,112,000

TABLE II CONTND.

Approved Capital Expenditure for NUC and Defence: 1985–1993 (M)

Year	NUC	Defence	Difference
1990	331,746,800	818,200,000	486,454,000
1991	76,302,750	577,993,665	501,690,915
1992	97,230,000	750,000,000	652,770,000
1993	700,000,000,	2,466,909,000	1,746,909,000

Source: Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Approved Budget, (1985–1993).

Data from the above two tables clearly show that whether by omission or commission, adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria has never been the interest of Nigerian Federal Government. The eight year period (with the exception of 1986 and 1987) under study revealed that the adequate funding of higher education in Nigeria has never been the priority of the government. Only in the capital expenditure of 1986 and 1987, that the approved capital expenditure for higher education was more than that of defence. This deliberate inability of government to adequately fund higher education in Nigeria has made one to view seriously whether the public can continue to rely or depend on the inadequate subvention of government on higher education, or to consider other sources for adequate and effective funding of higher education system in Nigeria.

This paper is concerned with the investigation and examination of the alternative ways or alternate revenue sourcing for higher education in Nigeria.

Synthesis of Literature

The observable degree of government involvement in the financing of higher education, particularly the University education, has however,

become a bone of contention between educators. While the massive degree of government involvement is considered proper and well met in some circles, others feel it is too much and has effectively taken the initiative for self growth and development from individuals and universities alike. Arguments therefore range from both for and against.

Those who believe in the totality of government support base their arguments on the principles and framework of public finance as it has been applied to the social services, especially education. Their insistence for public support for university education has been hinged on the promise that private, unsubsidized market transactions in higher education have failed to provide or produce what Broneman and Nelson (1981) referred to as the "right amoung of education (an efficiency concern), ar to distribute it evenly and fairly across the population (an equity concern)".

This group of people put forward an equity argument for public support of higher education under the barner that access to higher education and their resultant opportunities should not be limited solely to those who have the means to pay for it. Moreso, since it is argued, higher education is one of the goods and services that a just society will not leave to the vagaries of a private market.

To buttress these arguments further, Brown (1968), and Pechman (1970), claimed that educators who are staunch believers in the flow of benefits that accrue to a society from continued expansion and investment in education, also stressed the social benefits accruing to higher education. They contend that a lot of external or public benefits extending beyond the realms of private individual gains accrue from an investment in higher

education, and therefore, society must provide higher education at a price far below cost essentially in form of massive government subsidies. Their main bone of contention was beautifully encapsulated by Chambers (1963), when he stated that higher education is essentially a public function and a public obligation, not a private caprice.

There are however, opposing schools of thought, which disagree on the existence of such so called public benefits from higher education. This group of people maintain that there is even no precise way of measuring such public benefits. They therefore advocate minimal government involvement, insisting that the benefits of higher education are purely private and as such, the individual recipient should be made to pay for the education so received, and not become a burden and a drain on the society.

The Carnegie commission in its report of June, 1973 appeared to have agreed implicitly with these views. The commission report observed that at the post secondary level of education, it would appear to be the individual who primarily benefits and moreover that there was, as of that time, no wholly satisfactory way of accessing individual against social benefits.

The present trend of governmental involvement in the financing of higher education could be likened to the study of Hansen and Weisbrod (1969), which saw government financing of higher education as a "net transfer of resources from the poor to the rich". To this effect, it is advocated that the extent of private investment should be increased instead of the present situation where scarce public funds which could have been used for the provision of other social services is pumped into higher education.

Observations from these two schools of though show that the society at large may not benefit in a directly measurable way from higher education, the government, regarless of this fact still owes it a duty to adequately finance higher education to the best of its ability. However, in the periods of economic depression and financial pressure on governmental resources, such as now, the government might not be able to bear the full load, because of competing claims from other social services. Nevertheless, the financial problems facing higher education in Nigeria need to be addressed.

The IIEP (1996) attested to the fact that government rigidity in financial management particularly in the allocation of resources, and the inability of the managers of Universities to provide transparency and accountability with regard to management of finance constitute major impediment of sourcing higher education in African countries.

There is no doubt that at such a time like this, the need to advocate the charting of a middle course is inevitable. While one is not advocating total government withdrawal, alternative sources of financing higher education should be explored and utilized to save higher education in Nigeria.

Alternate Revenue Sourcing

Over the years, the major sources for educational finance in Nigeria are from public sector and individuals. Little or no attention has been given to other possible sectors, until recently when the poor financial position of most governments made and forced the higher institutions in Nigeria to seek for alternate sources of funds to augment their

educational needs. These other sources have not been known to play a significant role in the funding of higher education in Nigeria. All along, the higher education and in particular, the University system has been made to depend wholly on public sectors (Governments) for its educational funding.

Callaway and Musene (1968), analyzed the level of other sources in the educational finance at all level. The analyses showed that the period between 1962-64, revealed that the public sectors had 81.2% of the total education funding, while other sources had 18.8%. In the same vein, Akangbo (1985), analyzed the significant level of involvement of other sources in the funding of higher education. A study of Ibadan Polytechnic showed that the public sectors had 94.0%, while others including fees represented 6% for 1978/79 session. For 1979/80 and 1980/81, the public sectors had 90.5% and 89.6%, as against 9.5% and 10.4% for other sources respectively. From all evidences above, one can conclude that other sources for financing higher education in Nigeria have not been significant.

The present financial crisis in higher education has therefore made it very imperative to explore the increased involvement of alternate sources for funding higher education in Nigeria. The following identified alternate sources may be a starting point for solving the perennial problems in getting adequate financial resources to fund higher education in Nigeria.

(1) Private Enterprises

Over the years, the Nigerian private enterprises have not been known to play an appreciative role in the finance of higher education. These enterprises are the receivers of the end-products of the school system as they are employers of these products. Fortunately, the Academic

Staff Union of Nigerian Universities in 1992, called the attention of the governments to the need to explore ways of making these private enterprises get involved in the finance of higher education. A recommendation was made to the effect that a higher education tax of 2% pre-tax profit should be levied on all Companies operating in Nigeria, for the development of higher education. This, if implemented, will go a long way in funding of the higher education in Nigeria.

(2) Community Participation

The role of community or communities in the funding of higher education should not be under-estimated. The waves of community awareness in its responsibility to the adequate funding of higher education are presently increasing. Higher education institutions can capitalized on this awareness by enforcing the communities participation in the finance of higher education in Nigeria. Communities could be asked to donate land, and even build classrooms or donate equipments.

(3) Individual Recipient

Since higher education produces substantial benefits to the individual who acquires such an education, it is therefore will not be too much, if that individual is asked to contribute a portion of the cost of his education or training. Those who are rich enough should be made to pay for their education while the poor ones could be granted loan to acquire their education.

(4) Individual Higher Education Tax

Other alternative ways of funding higher education could be through the individual higher education tax. Where the government bears the cost of education on behalf of the individual at present, and at a later date, when the individual graduates, goes through National Youth Service Corps Scheme, and secure employment, the individual could be made to pay back the cost of his or her education by deducting certain percentage of his/her salary until he or she is able to pay back in full the cost of his/her education.

(5) Stabilization Fund

Apart from the normal and regular subventions from the government, a stabilization fund could be established to cater for future fluctuations in annual budgetary allocations. The establishment of stabilization fund will in no doubt have a positive effect in development of higher education in Nigeria.

(6) Work Study Programmes

Work study programmes in the higher institutions in Nigeria are other areas of alternate source of funding higher education. Students can be employed to do certain jobs, eg. cleaning, maintenance, and other menial jobs on campus, instead of contracting or having people fully employed for these menial jobs. The work study programmes could serve as a cost saving measure for the higher institutions, since the cost of employing students on a part-time basis would be greatly reduced to that of contractors or permanent employees. This would in turn give the higher institutions extra funds to use for other pressing areas of needs.

(7) Contribution By Voluntary Agencies And Philanthropic Individuals

Concerted efforts could be made to appeal to the public and voluntary agencies to cultivate the spirit of philanthropic in coming to the aid of the higher institutions through awards of fellowships, scholarships, endowments, and financing some capital projects.

(8) External Revenue Sources

External revenue sources could be explored and intensified. These are in form of foreign aids and grants. These scholarships and fellowships which are awarded or given for capital projects or expenditure, research projects and other educational purposes by various external governments and bodies, such as, the United Nations (UN), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ford Foundation in the United States of America, the Nuffield Foundation (UK), the UNESCO, the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), and other renown Philanthropists and voluntary agenc

(9) Fund From Alumni Association

The Alumni Association of higher institutions in the country could be made to contribute to the funding of higher education. This is one of the ways to show appreciations for the training received through these higher institutions. Though the contribution of some alumni associations to the growth and physical development of higher education in the country is noted, more efforts should be made to mobilize these associations to greater height in contributing to the development of higher education in Nigeria.

(10) Consultancy Services

Consultancy services are other possible avenues that could be considered for funding higher education. The government should be made aware of

the need to participate by patronising the higher institutions' consultancy services, to make it possible for the institutions to generate additional funds or revenues for the development of higher education. State governments, the public sector, and the private sector should also be encourgged to participate and patronize the higher institutions' consultancy services.

(11) Commercial Ventures

Investment in commercial ventures could be explored by Nigerian higher education institutions. These investments, if properly managed and monitored, could be one of the most important alternate sources that could make a positive impact on higher education funding. Higher education institutions could be encouraged to float some limited liability companies independently. Areas like Petrol filling stations, commercial farms, Real estate business, hotel management, and saw-mill business for those institutions located in a forest areas are some of the areas which a good investmer could be made.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that higher education in Nigeria is in a serious financial crisis as a result of the underfunding of the system by the Federa and States' governments. It is also clear from our investigations that governments cannot single handedly provide the adequate and necessary fund f higher education system. At this point in time, the notion that it is the responsibility of the government to provide social services including education for its citizens should be discarded. The deplorable condition of higher education system in Nigeria has confirmed the inability of the governments to solely fund the higher education system in Nigeria. Hence, the justification for alternate sources for funding higher education in

Nigeria.

While one would call on all principal operators of higher education in Nigeria to wake up to their primary responsibility of adequately funding the system, one should not loose the sight of reminding and educating the society in general to get involve in the funding of higher education. Unless the call for alternate source of funding higher education can be intensified as enumerated in this paper, the higher education system in Nigeria runs the risk of total collapse.

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